

***JOHN
FLETCHER***



***WIT WITHOUT
MONEY;
A COMEDY***

John Fletcher

Wit Without Money; A Comedy

The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher

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Persons Represented in the Play.

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Valentine, a Gallant that will not be perswaded to keep his Estate.

Francisco, his younger Brother.

Master Lovegood their Uncle.

A Merchant, Friend to Master Lovegood.

Fountain, }

Bellamore,} companions of Valentine, and Sutors to the Widow.

Hairbrain,}

Lance, a Falkner, and an ancient servant to Valentines Father.

Shorthose, the Clown, and servant to the Widow.

Roger, Ralph, and Humphrey, three servants to the Widow.

Three Servants.

Musicians.

Lady Hartwel, a Widow.

Isabel, her Sister.

Luce, a waiting Gentlewoman to the Widow.

Actus primus. Scena prima.

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Enter Uncle and Merchant.

Merc. When saw you Valentine?

Uncle. Not since the Horse-race, he's taken up with those that woo the Widow.

Mer. How can he live by snatches from such people? he bore a worthy mind.

Uncle. Alas, he's sunk, his means are gone, he wants, and which is worse,
Takes a delight in doing so.

Mer. That's strange.

Unc. Runs Lunatick, if you but talk of states, he cannot be brought (now he has spent his own) to think there's inheritance, or means, but all a common riches, all men bound to be his Bailiffs.

Mer. This is something dangerous.

Uncle. No Gentleman that has estate to use it in keeping house, or followers, for those wayes he cries against, for Eating sins, dull Surfeits, cramming of Serving-men, mustering of Beggars, maintaining Hospitals for Kites, and Curs, grounding their fat faiths upon old Country proverbs, God bless the Founders; these he would have ventured into more manly uses, Wit, and carriage, and never thinks of state, or means, the ground-works: holding it monstrous, men should feed their bodies, and starve their understandings.

Mer. That's most certain.

Uncle. Yes, if he could stay there.

Mer. Why let him marry, and that way rise again.

Uncle. It's most impossible, he will not look with any handsomeness upon a Woman.

Mer. Is he so strange to Women?

Uncle. I know not what it is, a foolish glory he has got, I know not where, to balk those benefits, and yet he will converse and flatter 'em, make 'em, or fair, or foul, rugged, or smooth, as his impression serves, for he affirms, they are only lumps, and undigested pieces, lickt over to a form by our affections, and then they show. The Lovers let 'em pass.

Enter Fountain, Bellamore, Hairbrain.

Mer. He might be one, he carries as much promise; they are wondrous merry.

Uncle. O their hopes are high, Sir.

Fount. Is *Valentine* come to Town?

Bella. Last night, I heard.

Fount. We miss him monstrously in our directions, for this Widow is as stately, and as crafty, and stands I warrant you —

Hair. Let her stand sure, she falls before us else, come let's go seek *Valentine*.

Mer. This Widow seems a Gallant.

Uncle. A goodly Woman, and to her handsomness she bears her state, reserved, and great Fortune has made her Mistress of a full means, and well she knows to use it.

M[e]r. I would *Valentine* had her.

Uncle. There's no hope of that, Sir.

Mer. O' that condition, he had his Mortgage in again.

Uncle. I would he had.

Mer. Seek means, and see what I'll do, however let the Money be paid in, I never sought a Gentlemans undoing, nor eat the bread of other mens vexations, you told me of another Brother.

Uncle. Yes Sir, more miserable than he, for he has eat him, and drunk him up, a handsome Gentleman, and fine Scholar.

Enter three Tenants.

Mer. What are these?

Unc. The Tenants, they'll do what they can.

Mer. It is well prepared, be earnest, honest friends, and loud upon him, he is deaf to his own good.

Lance. We mean to tell him part of our minds an't please you.

Mer. Do, and do it home, and in what my care may help, or my perswasions when we meet next.

Unc. Do but perswade him fairly; and for your money, mine, and these mens thanks too, and what we can be able.

Mer. Y'are most honest, you shall find me no less, and so I leave you, prosper your business my friends. [*Ex. Mer.*]

Unc. Pray Heaven it may, Sir.

Lance. Nay if he will be mad, I'll be mad with him, and tell him that I'll not spare him, his Father kept good Meat, good Drink, good Fellows, good Hawks, good Hounds, and bid his Neighbours welcome; kept him too, and supplied his prodigality, yet kept his state still; must we turn Tenants now, after we have lived under the race of Gentry, and maintained good Yeomantry, to some of the City, to a great shoulder of Mutton and a Custard, and have our state turned into Cabbage Gardens, must it be so?

Unc. You must be milder to him.

Lance. That's as he makes his game.

Unc. Intreat him lovingly, and make him feel.

Lance. I'll pinch him to the bones else.

[*Valen. Within.*] And tell the Gentleman, I'll be with him presently, say I want money too, I must not fail boy.

Lance. You'll want Cloaths, I hope.

Enter Valentine.

Val. Bid the young Courtier repair to me anon, I'll read to him.

Unc. He comes, [b]e diligent, but not too rugged, start him, but affright him not.

Val. Phew, are you there?

Unc. We come to see you Nephew, be not angry.

Val. Why do you dog me thus, with these strange people? why, all the world shall never make me rich more, nor master of these troubles.

Tenants. We beseech you for our poor Childrens sake.

Val. Who bid you get 'em? have you not threshing work enough, but Children must be bang'd out o'th' sheaf too? other men with all their delicacies, and healthful diets, can get but wind eggs: you with a clove of Garlick, a piece of Cheese would break a Saw, and sowre Milk, can mount like Stallions, and I must maintain these tumblers.

Lance. You ought to maintain us, we have maintained you, and when you slept provided for you; who bought the Silk you wear? I think our labours; reckon, you'll find it so: who found your Horses perpetual pots of Ale, maintain'd your Taverns, and who extol'd you in the Half-crown-boxes, where you might sit and muster all the Beauties? we had no hand in these; no, we are all puppies? Your Tenants base vexations.

Val. Very well, Sir.

Lance. Had you Land, Sir, and honest men to serve your purposes, honest and faithful, and will you run away from 'em, betray your self, and your poor Tribe to misery; mortgage all us, like old Cloaks; where will you hunt next? you had a thousand Acres, fair and open: The Kings-Bench is enclos'd, there's no good riding, the Counter is full of thorns and brakes, take heed Sir, and boggs, you'll quickly find what broth they're made of.

Val. Y'are short and pithy.

Lance. They say y'are a fine Gentleman, and of excellent judgement, they report you have a wit; keep your self out o'th' Rain, and take your Cloak with you, which by interpretation is your State, Sir, or I shall think your fame belied you, you have money, and may have means.

Val. I prethee leave prating, does my good lye within thy brain to further, or my undoing in thy pity? go, go, get you home, there whistle to your Horses, and let them edifie; away, sow Hemp to hang your selves withal: what am I to you, or you to me; am I your Landlord, puppies?

Unc. This is uncivil.

Val. More unmerciful you, to vex me with these Bacon Broth and Puddings, they are the walking shapes of all my sorrows.

3 Tenants. Your Fathers Worship would have used us better.

Val. My Fathers Worship was a Fool.

Lance. Hey, hey boys, old *Valentine* i'faith, the old boy still.

Unc. Fie Cousin.